

land full of promise. His courage and desire for success made him a hero to his people and a leader among men.

Today, centuries later, we recognize this historic day to pay tribute to Christopher Columbus and all Americans who boldly strive for success in their communities. By making the most out of Columbus's discovery every day the American people have distinguished themselves as an exceptional Nation.

Columbus Day celebrates our proud and united people and recognizes in particular the unique Italian-American experience. With strong leadership and eternal pride, Italian-American communities distinguish themselves through a strong sense of family and dedication to their youth.

Through the work of such groups as UNICO National, an organization committed to support youth programs, community development and other charitable societies, children and adults in the Italian-American community view the achievements of past leaders and understand what actions epitomize role models. Without the unceasing efforts of an exceptional staff, UNICO National would not enjoy the success and prestige that have come to characterize the organization.

In honor of their dedication to the growth and development of their communities and the United States as a whole, one day a year is devoted to acknowledging the contributions and achievements of Italian-Americans. Happy Columbus Day to my fellow Italian-Americans as they celebrate our patriotic heritage.

OTA: DEFENSE AGAINST THE DUMB

HON. GEORGE E. BROWN, JR.
OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 29, 1995

Mr. BROWN of California. Mr. Speaker, today marks the last day of existence for the Congressional Office of Technology Assessment [OTA]. For 23 years OTA has served the American public by giving invaluable guidance and analysis on the dizzying array of technological advances we face in modern society. In its ignorance, Congress has voted to end this institution. It will be missed.

In recent months, I have seen a lot of mindless things being done in the American public's name. First we saw science-based regulatory decisionmaking being used as a slogan for the process of gutting Federal health and safety regulations. Then we have witnessed the slashing of research budgets designed to provide the science upon which these decisions were to be based. Across government, research and development budgets have been cut in order to pay for tax cuts that we don't need.

This mindless approach to government substitutes public relations gimmicks for policy, trying to palm off as reforms simplistic proposals to sell House office buildings, dissolve cabinet agencies, and end daily ice deliveries to House offices. The unfortunate irony of this process is that the victim of this irrationality has been an agency set up to make the legislative process more rational: OTA.

I was serving in Congress in the mid-1960's when we first discussed the need for OTA. In what seems like the dark ages, before e-mail,

genetic engineering, flip phones, and dozens of other technologies that have changed our lives, we were concerned that the rush of technological advance would overwhelm our ability to make rational political judgments. We looked over the various congressional support agencies and did not find the kind of scientific and technological expertise needed to address the challenge. So, we created OTA, an agency that has served Congress well in the intervening years.

In recent months we have heard many criticisms of OTA, as those intent upon issuing press releases on the downsizing of government focused upon that agency's elimination. Some said that OTA studies took too long. But the OTA was established to provide comprehensive, balanced analysis of complex questions. It looked at the technology, at its social and economic impacts, and then made a range of recommendations for congressional action. That process takes a long time. For those with short attention spans, those who fear factual information because their minds are already made up, and those who never get past the executive summary of "shake and bake" boiler-plate policy reviews, OTA probably takes too long. For those of us who take our elective responsibilities seriously, careful analysis is a necessity.

Some critics have maintained that other congressional support agencies could accomplish the same task. That was not the case in 1972 and is even less true today. None of the support agencies have the expertise that OTA had on science and technology issues. None of these agencies employ the use of a balanced panel of outside experts and stakeholders to review the issue under examination. None of these agencies have a bipartisan, bicameral governing body to insure neutrality and independence. None of these agencies have a science advisory panel composed of world-class science and technology leaders. Each of these agencies have expertise and produce competent studies, but none can produce the high-quality in-depth studies for which OTA has become internationally known.

And I disagree with those who say that the executive branch, or the National Academy of Sciences, or some department of science could provide this information. These are not congressional agencies. They cannot tailor information to the unique needs of the legislative branch. And, as we determined when we first looked at this issue in the 1960's, we did not want the legislative held captive to information produced by the executive branch, without regard to which party is in the White House.

Mr. Speaker, as someone who was around at the birth of this agency, it saddens me to be present at its death. It saddens me to see dedicated public servants turned out of jobs that they performed with outstanding competence, even up until the final hours today. Each of us owes a debt of gratitude to those people and each of us has a responsibility to help them make the transition to another position. For those of my colleagues who are unaware, these people cannot use the Ramspeck provisions to move into civil service jobs. In fact they do not even have active civil service status. We have treated these people poorly and they deserve much better.

Let me conclude with an observation made by a former OTA employee who stated OTA's task as being to create for Congress a "de-

fense against the dumb." It is shameful that in the end, OTA was defenseless against a very dumb decision by Congress.

IN CELEBRATION OF THE LIFE OF CLEVELAND L. ROBINSON

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 29, 1995

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Cleveland L. Robinson, distinguished leader of the trade union movement and fighter for economic and civil rights. Indeed, he spent his life working for the poor and for those who have the least. Mr. Robinson's life is a great example of leadership for the new generation. Mr. Robinson passed away on August 23, 1995, and was buried in New York. In honor of Mr. Robinson and for the edification of my colleagues, I introduce the following statement:

CLEVELAND L. ROBINSON

Cleveland Lowellyn Robinson was born December 12, 1914, in Swaby Hope, a rural parish of Manchester, in Jamaica. He worked as an assistant teacher and then as a police officer until he emigrated to the United States in 1914.

Cleve, as he was known to all, began his union career in the United States in 1946, when he successfully led an effort to unionize the Manhattan dry goods company, where he worked. He joined the staff of District 65 as an organizer in 1947, was elected vice-president of the union in 1950 and secretary-treasury in 1952, a post he held until his retirement in 1992. During the 1950s and 1960s, Cleve led the Negro Affairs Committee, supervised the union's work in the south, and led its adult literacy and vocational education programs.

During the fifties, he worked with A. Philip Randolph to found the Negro American Labor Council and become the council's president upon Randolph's retirement in 1966. Cleve was a charter member of the organization's successor, the National Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, and served as CBTU's executive vice-president until his death.

Cleve was a close friend and advisor to the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1963, Cleve served as the administrative chair for the great March on Washington. Cleve's work epitomized the union's philosophical and organizational commitment to civil rights that led King to describe District 65 as "the conscience of the labor movement." Cleve also served as a commissioner of the New York City Commission on Human Rights under Mayors Wagner and Lindsay. He was a life member of the NAACP since 1953, and a member of the boards of directors of the southern Christian Leadership Conference and the Martin Luther King, Jr., Center for Non-Violent Social Change. He was a founding member of the New York State Martin Luther King, Jr. Commission, appointed by Governor Mario Cuomo as the commission's vice-chairman in 1985 and the chairman in 1993.

Cleve was also a staunch supporter of the African National Congress since the early 1960s and a close friend of the Congress of South Africa Trade Unions [COSATU]. He was a founder of the Labor Committee Against Apartheid Coordinating Council, and co-chair of the official visit of Nelson Mandela to New York in 1990.

Cleve continually maintained close ties to his native Jamaica, organizing relief efforts